Handout One

Course overview.

Main issues of translation studies.

Course Information:

No.hours: 30   ECTS: 7   Tutor: dr Anna Kuzio
Room: G A20   E-mail: a.kuzio@in.uz.zgora.pl
Password: semantics201   WWW: http://a-kuzio.weebly.com

Key texts


1.1 The concept of translation

In the field of languages, translation today has several meanings:

(1) the general subject field or phenomenon (‘I studied translation at university’)

(2) the product – that is, the text that has been translated (‘they published the German translation of the report’)

(3) the process of producing the translation, otherwise known as translating (‘translation service’).

Source text (ST)                               Target text (TT)
in source language (SL)                        in target language (TL)
Jakobson distinguished the following categories:

(1) **intralingual** translation, or ‘rewording’ – ‘an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language’

(2) **interlingual** translation, or ‘translation proper’ – ‘an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language’

(3) **intersemiotic** translation, or ‘transmutation’ – ‘an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of non-verbal sign systems’. (Jakobson 1959/2004: 139)

Sandra Halverson (1999) claims that translation can be better considered as a **prototype** classification.

Maria Tymoczko (2005, 2006, 2007: 68–77) discusses the very different words and metaphors for ‘translation’ in other cultures, indicative of a **conceptual orientation** where the goal of close lexical fidelity to an original may not therefore be shared, certainly in the practice of translation of sacred and literary texts.

### 1.2 What is translation studies?

- ‘**translation studies**’ - James S. Holmes (1924–1986)
- specialized translating and interpreting programmes
- conferences, books and journals


- general and analytical instruments

Translation Theories (Pym 2010), the Handbook of Translation Studies (Gambier and van Doorslaer 2010) and The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies (Malmkjær and Windle 2011).

1.3 An early history of the discipline

The practice of translation was crucial for the early dissemination of key cultural and religious texts and concepts.

From the late eighteenth century to the 1960s and beyond, language learning in secondary schools in many countries had come to be dominated by what was known as grammar-translation (Cook 2010:9–15).

In 1960s USA, starting in Iowa and Princeton, literary translation was promoted by the translation workshop concept.

Comparative literature, where literature is studied and compared transnationally and transculturally, necessitating the reading of some works in translation.

Another area in which translation became the subject of research was contrastive linguistics.

The more systematic, linguistic-oriented, approach to the study of translation began to emerge in the 1950s and 1960s. There are a number of now classic examples:

■ Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet produced their Stylistique comparée du français et de l’anglais (1958), a contrastive study of French and English which introduced key terminology for describing translation. It was not translated into English until 1995;
■ Alfred Malblanc (1944/1963) had done the same for translation between French and German;
■ Georges Mounin’s Les problèmes théoriques de la traduction (1963) examined linguistic issues of translation;
■ Eugene Nida (1964) incorporated elements of Chomsky’s then fashionable generative grammar as a theoretical underpinning of his books, which were initially designed to be practical manuals for Bible translators.

1.4 The Holmes/Toury ‘map’

A seminal paper in the development of the field as a distinct discipline was James S. Holmes’s ‘The name and nature of translation studies’ (Holmes 1988b/2004). In his Contemporary Translation Theories, Gentzler (2001: 93) describes Holmes’s paper as ‘generally accepted as the founding statement for the field.’
In Holmes’s explanations of this framework (Holmes 1988b/2004: 184–90), the objectives of the ‘pure’ areas of research are:

(1) the description of the phenomena of translation; and

(2) the establishment of general principles to explain and predict such phenomena (translation theory).

The ‘theoretical’ branch is divided into general and partial theories.

The descriptive branch of ‘pure’ research in Holmes’s map is known as descriptive translation studies (DTS).

It may examine: (1) the product; (2) the function; and (3) the process.

(1) **Product-oriented DTS** examines existing translations.

(2) By **function-oriented DTS**, Holmes (ibid.) means the description of the ‘function [of translations] in the recipient sociocultural situation: it is a study of contexts rather than texts’. Issues that may be researched include which texts were translated when and where, and the influences that were exerted.

(3) **Process-oriented DTS** in Holmes’s framework is concerned with the psychology of translation, i.e. it is concerned with trying to find out what happens in the mind of a translator.

- **Medium-restricted theories** subdivide according to translation by machine and humans, with further subdivisions according to whether the machine/computer is working alone (automatic machine
translation) or as an aid to the human translator (computer-assisted translation), to whether the human translation is written or spoken and to whether spoken translation (interpreting) is consecutive or simultaneous.

- **Area-restricted theories** are restricted to specific languages or groups of languages and/or cultures.
- **Rank-restricted theories** are linguistic theories that have been restricted to a level of (normally) the word or sentence.
- **Text-type restricted theories** look at discourse types and genres; e.g. literary, business and technical translation.
- The term **time-restricted** is self-explanatory, referring to theories and translations limited according to specific time frames and periods.
- **Problem-restricted theories** can refer to certain problems such as equivalence (a key issue that came to the fore in the 1960s and 1970s) or to a wider question of whether so-called ‘universals’ of translation exist.

The ‘applied’ branch of Holmes’s framework concerns applications to the practice of translation:

- **translator training**: teaching methods, testing techniques, curriculum design;
- **translation aids**: such as dictionaries and grammars;
- **translation criticism**: the evaluation of translations, including the marking of student translations and the reviews of published translations.

Another area Holmes mentions is **translation policy**, where he sees the translation scholar advising on the place of translation in society.
1.5 Developments since the 1970s

The linguistics-oriented ‘science’ of translation has continued strongly in Germany, but the concept of equivalence associated with it has been questioned and reconceived.

Germany has seen the rise of theories centred around text types and text purpose (the skopos theory of Reiss and Vermeer,).

The Hallidayan influence of discourse analysis and systemic functional grammar, which views language as a communicative act in a sociocultural context, came to prominence in the early 1990s.

The late 1970s and the 1980s also saw the rise of a descriptive approach that had its origins in comparative literature and Russian Formalism.

A pioneering centre was Tel Aviv, where Itamar Even-Zohar and Gideon Toury pursued the idea of the literary polysystem.

‘Manipulation School’

Bassnett and Lefevere’s volume Translation, History and Culture (1990) then introduced the term ‘cultural turn’. 
1.6 The van Doorslaer ‘map’

‘Translation’ looks at the act of translating and, in the new map (van Doorslaer 2007: 223), is subdivided into:

- lingual mode (interlingual, intralingual);
- media (printed, audiovisual, electronic);
- mode (covert/overt translation, direct/indirect translation, mother tongue/other tongue translation, pseudo-translation, retranslation, self-translation, sight translation, etc.);
- field (political, journalistic, technical, literary, religious, scientific, commercial).

Translation studies (ibid.: 228–31) is subdivided into:

- approaches (e.g. cultural approach, linguistic approach);
- theories (e.g. general translation theory, polysystem theory);
- research methods (e.g. descriptive, empirical);
- applied translation studies (criticism, didactics, institutional environment).

1.7 Discipline, interdiscipline or multidiscipline?

A notable characteristic of recent research has been its interdisciplinarity.

Some current projects are also multidisciplinary, involving the participation of researchers from various disciplines, including translation studies.

habitus - a structured network of socially and educationally acquired dispositions that in turn contribute to the creation of norms and conventions of behavior (Simeoni 1998: 21–2).
Figure 1.3 Translation strategies (following van Doorslaer 2007: 226)
**Discussion**

1. What words are used for ‘translation’ in the languages you work with? Explore their origins. What do you think their use says about the conceptualization of translation? See Chesterman (2006) for an example analysis.

2. Investigate the use of other terms, such as ‘adaptation’, ‘version’ and ‘transcreation’. In what contexts are they used? How easy is it to define these terms? In the light of your findings, try to write a definition of ‘translation’.

---

**Figure 1.4** Translation procedures (following van Doorslaer 2007: 227)